

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
CONGRESSMAN TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN



NEWS RELEASE

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Davis Applauds Congressional Re-Authorization of
D.C. Tuition Assistance Program

Program Has Helped Thousands of D.C. Students Pay for College

Washington, D.C. - House Government Reform Committee Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA) is pleased to announce that the U.S. House of Representatives approved today the Conference Report for H.R. 4012, legislation to extend the District of Columbia College Access Program for two more years, by voice vote. The legislation will now go the Presidents for his signature.

H.R. 4012 was introduced by Chairman Davis and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) on March 23 of this year. The legislation is needed to keep the successful Tuition Assistance Grants (TAG) program going because the initiative, established by the D.C. College Access Act of 1999, would otherwise expire at the conclusion of the next fiscal year. H.R. 4012 reauthorizes the program for an additional two years.

Congress established the D.C. College Access Program in 1999 for two primary reasons. First, the Program addresses the fact that the District of Columbia does not have a State university system for its high school graduates. The Program essentially leveled the playing field for high school graduates in the Nation's Capital by enabling them to attend colleges and universities around the country at in-State tuition rates. The Program's second purpose was to deter tax-paying families in the District from moving to surrounding States in order to take advantage of in-State higher education options available to residents in other States, thus depriving the District of much needed stability and tax revenue.

"The College Access Program has been a key component of the District's revitalization efforts in recent years, and I'm pleased Congress has recognized how critical it is that Congress continues to support its partnership with the District in

providing access to higher education resources,” Davis said. “Since the creation of the program, the number of high school graduates in the District continuing onto college has increased 28 percent. The national average, over the same period, was an increase of approximately 5 percent. That is an astounding record of success.”

According to a survey of high school graduates in the District, the vast majority of students who have received assistance through the Program have indicated that the existence of the grants made a difference in their decision to attend college, and was a key factor in deciding which college to attend.

“I can’t tell you how many mothers and fathers have approached me to say, ‘Thank you. We were going to have to leave D.C. so our child could go to college, but thanks to this Program, we can stay.’ H.R. 4012 represents a shot at a better education and, in turn, a better life for countless D.C. students,” added Davis.

The House passed a 5-year reauthorization for the Program in July, but after discussions with the Senate, Davis agreed to limit the reauthorization to two years while the Committee continues to work with the city to refine the scope and mission of the Program.

More than 6,500 students have received tuition assistance since the program’s inception in 2000. The Tuition Assistance Grants program covers the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition rates, up to \$10,000 per year, for District of Columbia high school graduates who attend public colleges and universities in other states. Additionally, the program provides up to \$2,500 annually in tuition assistance to D.C. high school graduates who attend private colleges and universities in the counties surrounding the District. Finally, an amendment to the legislation in 2001 authorized the program to provide up to \$2,500 annually to D.C. high school graduates who attend private Historically Black Colleges and Universities throughout the country.

The Government Reform Committee held a hearing on the program in March, where city leaders, education officials and a former TAG recipient testified to its success.

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